

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2641

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FROM MAESTRONE

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: TUTANKHAMUM EXHIBITION

REF: A. CAIRO 2039 B. CAIRO 1181

1. DURING CALL ON DCM MARCH 7, THOMAS HOVING, DIRECTOR OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, WHOSE VISIT HERE WAS FORECAST IN REFTEL B, INDICATED THAT METROPOLITAN WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING UNDERTAKE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF TUTANKHAMUN EXHIBITION TOUR IN US. DISCUSSION ACTUALLY BEGAN PREVIOUS EVENING AT DINNER TENDERED IN HOVING'S HONOR BY DR. GAMAL MOUKHTAR, MINCULTURE UNDERSEC FOR ANTIQUITIES, WHEN HOVING REVIEWED CERTAIN IDEAS HE HAD REGARDING ORGANIZATION OF TOUR.

2. CITING PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING IMPORTANT FOREIGN EXHIBITIONS, HOVING STRESSED NECESSITY TO MAKE CAREFUL PREPARATIONS ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOUR OF THIS IMPORTANCE. HE FELT THAT, IF PROPERLY HANDLED, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY IT COULD NOT BE A FINANCIAL SUCCESS. WHEN ASST CURATOR OF EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, WHO WAS PRESENT, VALUED EXHIBITION AT APPROX \$2.5 MILLION, HOVING EXPRESSED VIEW THAT INSURANCE COSTS WOULD NOT BE EXCESSIVE. IN CASE OF A HIGHER EVALUATION, HE SUGGESTED POSSIBLE NEED FOR PASSAGE OF AN INDEMNITY BILL. HOVING ALSO OUTLINED IMPORTANCE

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OF PUBLICITY AND SUGGESTED THAT, IF HE WERE MANAGING TOUR,

HE WOULD SEEK SMALL INVOLVEMENT OF PERHAPS CBS WHICH WOULD INSURE THAT EXHIBITION WOULD GET CONTINUING COVERAGE AS IT WENT FROM CITY TO CITY. HE FORESAW TOUR TO FOUR OR FIVE CITIES BEGINNING IN WASHINGTON AT NATIONAL GALLERY-- WHERE HE NOTED POLICY REQUIREMENT OF FIRST SHOWING HAVING EXHIBITIONS --AND AFTER VISITS TO OTHER CITIES SELECTED SO AS TO GIVE BROAD GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE, ENDING IN NEW YORK AT METROPOLITAN. HIS PREFERRED TIMING WOULD BE TO HAVE EXHIBITION, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE IN US FOR ABOUT ONE YEAR, COME TO NEW YORK IN FALL OF 1977 SO AS TO COINCIDE WITH ANTICIPATED OPENING OF METROPOLITAN'S TEMPLE OF DENDERA EXHIBIT.

3. HOAVING SAID HE HAD TWO MEETINGS SCHEDULED WITH MOUKHTAR DURING HIS BRIEF TWO-DAY VISIT IN WHICH HE PLANNED TO OUTLINE HIS IDEAS ON ORGANIZATION OF TUTANKHAMUN EXHIBITION TOUR. HE STATED THAT METROPOLITAN WOULD, IN ALL PROBABILITY, BE WILLING TO ORGANIZE TOUR IF IT RECEIVES FORMAL REQUEST FROM MINISTRY OF CULTURE ENDORSED BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

4. HAVONG PROMISED TO PROVIDE DETAILED MEMORANDUM OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. MOUKHTAR FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO US.

5. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENTS' VIEWS RE POSSIBILITY OF METROPOLITAN ASSUMPTION OF ORGANIZATION OF TUTANKHAMUN TOUR AND ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE MADE IN SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH DR. MOUKHTAR.
EILTS

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